

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are currently pending in the application of the present invention.

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

Apparently, the Examiner believes that claim 1, for example, is unclear as to the scope of the invention. The Examiner suggested that an objective of the claimed invention be inserted into the preamble to improve clarity.

Applicants respectfully submit that an objective of the present invention is currently present in claim 1, for example. In particular, claim 1 recites, "A service management program for hotel facilities, which operates in conjunction with a lodging management system for the management of information about the guests of the hotel . . ."

Thus, an object of the present invention is to provide a service management program for hotel facilities that operates in conjunction with a lodging management system, as identified by the language of the preamble of claim 1. Therefore, an objective of the invention is already indicated in the claim.

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,832,452 (Schneider).

Schneider is directed to a method of using a computer to select hotels described in a database. The computer receives input from a user of search criteria in one or more categories and then searches the database for hotels having data that matches the criteria. After a list of the hotels is displayed, the user may then select one or more of the hotels on the list. In response to the selection, the computer accesses the hotel data of the selected hotel and displays detailed data about the hotel. See Schneider, column 1, lines 35-46.

In at least one embodiment, the present invention includes a service management program operating in conjunction with a lodging management system. A service management table for managing attributes of the services of the hotels and availability of hotel facilities is compared with the attributes of a particular guest. A service suitable for the guest's attributes is then indicated.

For example, a seat management apparatus of the present invention can be used in conjunction with a lodging management system. After receiving a hotel room number of a guest,

for example, the seat management apparatus transmits the room number to a lodging management system to obtain information about the guest having the particular room number. A seat management table which displays attributes such as whether a seat is to be assigned on a priority basis and/or whether the seat is available can then be consulted using the guest information.

Next, the attributes are compared with the guest's attributes such as priority level of the guest, for example, VIP. Finally, the seat is assigned based on the information, and the information is relayed to the lodging management system, thereby allowing the service management program executing on the seat management apparatus, to execute in conjunction with the lodging management system. See Specification of the Present Invention, page 7, line 29 – page 8, line 20. Thus, the present invention involves a lodging management system and a service management apparatus or system.

In light of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the claims of the present invention are patentable over Schneider, as Schneider does not teach each and every element of the claims. For example, Schneider fails to teach or suggest,

“ . . . comparing a service management table for the management of the attributes of the services of the hotel facilities and for the management of the availabilities of the hotel facilities, with the guest's own attributes . . . which has been *obtained from the lodging management system . . . [emphasis added]*”

, as recited in claim 1, for example.

Unlike the present invention, Schneider does not compare a service management table including service attributes and facility availability with a guest's attributes *obtained from a lodging management system*. At column 4, line 35, Schneider indicates that a processor 11 displays a list of hotels in a database that satisfies a user's criteria. Thus, the display is the result of a user entering data into a computer system to obtain information about hotels within a geographical area. See Schneider, column 2, lines 44-48. In Schneider, as the data entered into the system is received from a user manually typing the data into the computer system (see Fig. 1, element 15), the data is not obtained from a lodging management system, as in the present invention. In fact, in Schneider, there is only one system, that is, the computer system via which the user enters data.

Therefore, claims 1, 4, 7, and 8 are patentable over the reference, as the reference fails to teach the above-identified feature of the present invention. As dependent claims 2-3 and 5-6 depend from independent claims 1 and 4, respectively, the dependent claims are patentable

over the reference for at least the reasons presented above for the independent claims.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

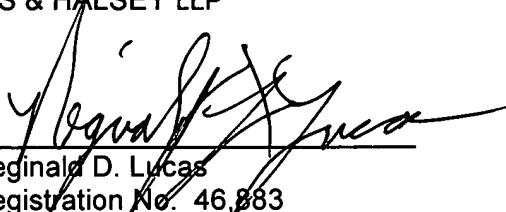
Respectfully submitted,

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